

Ravalli County Commissioners
Ravalli County Airport Board

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Ravalli County Airport Manager

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This is a letter to follow up on my phone conversation with you the other day regarding an incident with the Ravalli County Unicom Operator. The following is a written statement as to the event. On April 14, 2007, I was flying my aircraft along with the silvertip skydiver's aircraft piloted by Lynn Klien as a flight of two from Missoula to Hamilton. I had been away for the night so I was not familiar with the weather conditions at the Ravalli County Airport. As I approached Victor, I requested an airport advisory. Steve Wolters came on the radio and gave me an advisory to include the winds are favoring runway 16. I had been looking at the smoke from a few fires and that didn't seem right. It looked like the winds were clearly out of the North. I decided to discount his advisory and over fly the airport to check the wind sock for myself. The winds were definitely out of the North and fairly strong. We entered a left downwind for runway 34. The landing was uneventful.

Northstar Aviation which has control of the Unicom will not give any planes owned by my business airport advisory unless they ask specifically and then maybe only 20% of the time at that. I understand the rules are you need to request the advisory. We do request it and they still do not always respond. This time, I was rather shocked that he gave it to me. Unfortunately, it was wrong and misleading. If I had decided to do a straight in approach from the North to runway 16 as he advised, it could have been catastrophic. I estimate the winds were from 12 to 15 MPH from the North.

This is not the first complaint about Northstar Aviation and the use of the Unicom. This is the first complaint that I know of that includes the safety of issuing wrong and misleading information risking the safety of pilots and those flying with them aircraft. I have made complaints that Northstar Aviation will not give airport advisories to the pilots flying my aircraft which does include a safety factor for my students. I have complained about the misuse of the Unicom to direct business to them and away from others. But, issuing wrong and misleading information jeopardizing the safety of those in an aircraft is inexcusable.

I am requesting that the Unicom is immediately removed from the control of Northstar Aviation. No information is better then wrong information. I expect your attention to this matter. Time after time Northstar Aviation has abused the Unicom. Time after time Northstar Aviation is told the rules and told to abide by them. Northstar Aviation continues to disregard the warnings and this time their violations could have been very

serious. It is time to act. Warnings do not work. The Unicom must be removed from Northstar Aviation. Time for warnings is over.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Fournier', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Mark J. Fournier